



MAINE JUDICIAL BRANCH  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **The Maine Judicial Branch limits email case filing as pandemic restrictions begin to ease**

**Portland, ME. May 27, 2021** The Maine Supreme Judicial Court announced today that it has revised Pandemic Management Order PMO-SJC-3 to discontinue email filing in most types of cases. The SJC first permitted email filing as a safety measure while the COVID-19 pandemic was surging as a way to reduce the number of people required to go to a courthouse. Although processing emailed filings is much more labor intensive for court staff, the special accommodation was deemed necessary to maintain social distancing and limit exposure to COVID-19 before vaccinations became widely available.

On September 3, 2020, the court discontinued the emailed filings provision, but on September 23, in response to widespread expressions from the bar in favor of emailed filings, the court reinstituted and expanded opportunities for emailed filings at a time when only limited types of dockets were being handled. With the recent expansion of dockets, however, the number of emailed filings has increased to the point where the acceptance and processing of emailed filings is no longer sustainable.

As the Governor and the Maine CDC begin to ease pandemic restrictions with the availability of COVID-19 vaccines, courts are focused on addressing the backlog of cases. As made clear in revised PMO-SJC-3, although the courts will immediately start to address the backlog:

*[Courts] continue to be hampered by shortages of clerks and marshals and the on-going need for court closures. The clerks' offices are simply not able to handle the regular business of the courts while also handling the additional task created by email filing.*

Therefore, the acceptance of filings sent by email will be discontinued effective June 7 for all case types **EXCEPT that emailed filings will continue to be accepted for:**

- Protection from harassment and protection from abuse cases;
- Proposed orders; and
- Guardian ad litem reports.

This order does not affect the electronic filing of documents in the Bangor District Court, Penobscot Superior Court, or the statewide Business and Consumer Docket.





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